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# THE FOOD CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

*A Guide for  
Retailers and  
Wholesalers*



**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. FNS-9**

JANUARY 1970



## ***A Plan for Low Income Mothers and Infants***



The FOOD CERTIFICATE PROGRAM is a new method of providing extra nutritious food through retail stores for low-income women, during and after pregnancy, and their infants. Retailers and wholesalers not only render valuable service to their community and to the Nation, but also share in the increased business activity generated when food certificate shoppers are given greater access to America's abundance. This guide will help you provide this service.





## HOW TO APPLY

Food and drug retailers and wholesalers who wish to be part of this program may get an application by calling or writing the local Food and Nutrition Service Field Office, USDA. If you write, include the name, address and telephone number of your firm.

When you receive the application, answer all the questions and check the items that apply to your business. Keep in mind that false answers may result in denial or cancellation of approval to participate. After completing and signing the application, mail or deliver it to the Food and Nutrition Service Field Office. You may be asked to visit the office for a personal interview or you may be visited by a food certificate representative before authorization to participate is granted.

## ELIGIBLE FOODS

Authorized food retailers can accept food certificates from known recipients for milk, infant formula, and infant cereal, as defined in the regulations.

You will receive an Official Food List with the above information. This list must be displayed in your store.

## AUTHORIZATION

All firms approved to participate will be issued a Food Certificate Program Authorization Card which must be kept in the store. The authorization number on the card must be used when you redeem certificates. If you move or sell your business, notify the Food and Nutrition Service Field Office immediately.

No food certificate can be accepted by a firm before receiving the authorization card nor after it is withdrawn or surrendered.

## REDEEMING FOOD CERTIFICATES

Authorized retailers and wholesalers may present Federal food certificates to participating banks for redemption. Each certificate must be endorsed with the authorization number or name of the store redeeming it. Certificates may be redeemed for cash or credit.

To be redeemed through banks or wholesalers, certificates presented by retailers must be accompanied by a completed "Retail Merchant's Food Certificate Program Redemption Voucher" (Form FNS-93).

Authorized wholesalers who have received certificates from authorized retailers

can redeem such certificates at participating banks only if they are accompanied by (1) The retailer's redemption voucher for the certificates, and (2) A completed "Wholesaler's Food Stamp Program Redemption Voucher" (Form FNS-94).

Redemption vouchers will be supplied by your Food and Nutrition Service Field Office.

## FILLING OUT THE REDEMPTION VOUCHER

The "Retail Merchant's Food Certificate Program Redemption Voucher" must be filled out this way: Block (A)—Show the name and address of the bank or wholesaler redeeming certificates. Block (B)—Show your store's name, address, authorization number, and the date. Block (C)—Show the value of the certificates you are redeeming. Block (D)—Sign in the space provided and give your title.

The "Wholesaler's Food Certificate Program Redemption Voucher" is filled out exactly the same as the retailer's except for Block E on the reverse side, in which the names or authorization numbers of retailers and value of certificates redeemed by each must be shown. The voucher accompanying the retailer's certificates must also be attached.

Retailers

# DO

- Read the Food Certificate Program Regulations carefully
- Post Official Food List
- Instruct employees on handling food certificate transactions
- Keep Authorization Card available
- Ask unknown customers for Food Certificate Identification Card
- Accept certificates only for eligible foods on same terms as cash purchases
- Use banks when possible to redeem certificates
- Mark or stamp store name or authorization number on certificates before redemption



# DON'T

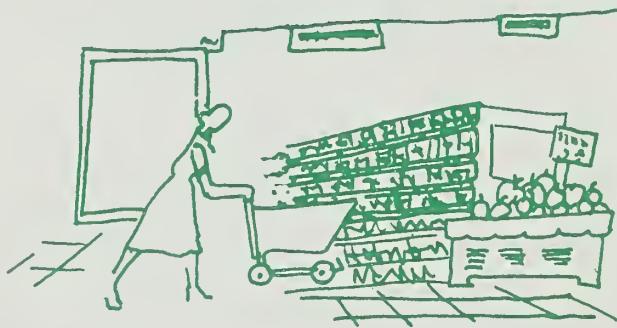
- Accept food certificates before being authorized
- Accept cancelled or endorsed certificates
- Accept loose certificates
- Accept certificates for foods other than those on the Official Food List
- Give change
- Accept certificates for payment on charge accounts
- Accept certificates for bottle or other container deposits

# DON'T

# DON'T

# DON'T

# Questions and Answers



## Q WHAT IS THE FOOD CERTIFICATE PROGRAM?

**A** It is a means by which low-income women, during and after pregnancy, and infants are able to buy nutritious food in retail stores. Their purchases are made with Federal food certificates, which permit them to buy milk, infant formula, and infant cereal. Thus, they can buy additional food for a more nutritious diet, with the convenience of normal shopping practice. The program's purpose is to safeguard the health of the designated low-income persons through better nutrition. The food certificates, redeemable for cash by participating grocers, are added food buying power, thus benefiting retailers and wholesalers and stimulating the local economy.



referred from prenatal and well baby clinics and services, and their infants. Eligible persons, or their authorized representative with the recipient's ID card, may purchase eligible food at authorized retail food or drug stores.

## Q MUST STORE EMPLOYEES KNOW HOW TO HANDLE CERTIFICATES?

**A** Yes. Store operators should instruct both full- and part-time employees how to handle the food certificate business properly. This will minimize errors and the possibility of violations which can cause cancellation of your Food Certificate Program Authorization, and other penalties.

## Q SHOULD FOOD CERTIFICATE CUSTOMERS BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER CUSTOMERS?

**A** No. Food certificate customers are the same as any other cash customer. Neither are they entitled to any preferential treatment.

## Q WHO MAY USE FOOD CERTIFICATES TO BUY FOOD?

**A** Eligible persons include low-income women, during and after pregnancy, who are receiving public assistance, participating in the Food Stamp Program, or



## Q HOW SHOULD FOOD CERTIFICATE PURCHASES BE HANDLED AT THE CHECK-OUT COUNTER?

**A** Retailers should ask customers if they are certificate shoppers when they reach the check-out counter. Certificate foods should be initially separated from other items and tabulated for total cost including sales tax. Certificates can only be accepted in an amount equal to or less than the total cost of the eligible merchandise. When the total of the certificates is less than the total cost, the difference must be paid by the customer. Food coupons may be used to pay the difference, if the customer is a food stamp participant and the store is authorized to accept food coupons.



and the total cost of eligible merchandise, the credit amount due the customer from the food coupons shall be applied towards food coupon purchases or a credit slip may be issued for future food stamp purchases.

## Q CAN SALES TAX BE PAID WITH FOOD CERTIFICATES?

**A** Yes. Food certificates may be accepted for payment of sales tax, but only for taxes on eligible foods purchased with certificates. That's another reason for separating certificate purchases from the items that are to be paid in some other manner.

## Q MAY CHANGE BE GIVEN FOR FOOD CERTIFICATES?

**A** No. Change may not be given for certificates. The customer must pay the difference involved in cash or may use food coupons as indicated above. If the customer uses food coupons to pay the difference between the total certificate value

## Q MAY FOOD CERTIFICATE SHOPPERS LEAVE THEIR CERTIFICATE BOOKS AT FOOD OR DRUG STORES?

**A** No. Certificate books must be kept in the possession of persons to whom they are issued. The books are to be presented each time purchases are made with certificates.

